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THE ETCHER'S ART.

THE TOOLS HE WORKS WITH AND THE EFFECTS HE PRODUCES.

An Artist Gives the History of an Etching-Preparing the Ground-Drawing on the Gelatine Plate-"Biting In"

"Let me give you in a connected story the history of an etching from the time the copper plate is placed in position for work until it leaves the hands of the printer. In the first place, the copper plate is thoroughly washed with turpentine, or, better, with ben-zine, for the former is a little too thin. This is to remove any grease. The plate is then heated, commonly by burning under it heavy etching paper, or, if the plate is a large one, by a spirit lamp. It is heated to such a tem-perature that water will roll off in globules. When the plate is sufficiently heated a preparation known as 'etching ground' is applied. This is a composition which comes prepared in the shape of a round ball, about the size of a black walnut, and is made of asphaltum. beeswax and oil of lavender. This composi-tion is carefully tied up in silk, and through this silk the etchis; ground cozes on to the plate, where it is laid with a roller. After the ground is applied and has sufficiently cooled, it is smoked, in order to give the etcher a black surface on which to work. The smoking is done with a twisted wax taper, can-dies, or in fact any substance which will produce the desired effect. When the plate is cold the ground is perfectly hard. So much for the first part of the process, that of preparing the plate. OUTLINE OF THE DRAWING.

"The etcher is now ready for work in earnest. He takes a drawing, which, of course, may be original or a copy, and etches its fac-simile on the plate before him. If he wishes to take special pains with his subject, which is usually the case, he does not copy the drawing directly on the plate, but take an intermediate step. Over his drawing he fastens a perfectly hard transparent gelatine composition, and with his etching point etches the drawing on this, exactly on the principle of the transparent slate of our nur-sery days. The gelatine plate is removed, and presents a rough and scratched surface. It is lightly scraped, but so lightly that the indented lines are not disturbed or offaced. These lines are filled with red chalk. The the etching ground of the copper plate. A burnisher is applied, which transfers the chalk to the etcher's form or upon the plate. Thus the etcher has a perfect outline of the drawing on the plate on which he is to work. In this way he is guided in his task, and his

work is expedited.
"The other now begins to use the tools of his trade, each of which is known as an 'etching point.' With these instruments the subject is again etched, this time on the etcher's ground. Where the etcher wishes to obtain the darkest effects fewer lines are etched and are made further apart to enable them to stand a longer bite by the acid. Of course the acid bites into the copper plate only where the etching point has scratched through the etcher's ground to the original copper plate. If the plate on which the artist is at work is a small one, it is placed in a pan and the acid is than poured on. If, however, it is a large one, there is put around the edge of the plate what is known as a 'frame of wall wax,' in one corner of which is placed a spout for con-venience in pouring off the acid.

"BITING IN" THE LINES. The first application of the acid is weak. It bites clean and delicately. It leaves the sky lines, the distance lines, and, in general, the lighter part of the picture. After these lines are bitten the acid is poured off, and the ground washed with water. Then the parts which the artist does not wish to have longer acted upon by the acid are covered with a stopping-out varnish. The next application of the acid is stronger, in order to obtain the heavier effects. So the artist continues stop-ping-out one place after another until the plate is sufficiently bitten, and until he has reached the foreground. When the entire plate has been sufficiently bitten, or, in other words, when the picture has been etched into the copper plate by means of the acid, the wax wall is removed and the plate thoroughly cleaned with benzine. Now he can go to the printer and see what he has. If some of the lines prove too heavy, a little instrument known as the burnisher will reduce them. The lines can even be run out entirely. If the lines are not strong enough, a new rebiting ground can be put on wherever desired and

the changes made.
"When the last touches have been completted the plate is sent to the publishers. The publishers send it to an electrotyper to have a steel face put on. This is done to protect the plate, which would otherwise soon be wern out on the press. The operation of electrotyping the plate is so delicately done that when steeled the picture which it prints could not be distinguished from the picture printed before the operation by the original copper plate. The finest lines are coated; lines which are hardly visible to the naked eye, and which originally have the appearance of a hair."—New York Commercial Adver-

An Incident of Tweed's Escape. The account of the extravagant price paid for human hair to Mr. Dibblee recalls to the mind of that gentleman an incident of Tweed's escape from Ludlow Street jail. Mr. Dibblee had had a wig of superior quality and beauty made to cover the temporary baldness of his son, whose hend had just been shaved. The son failed to go for the wig at the hour agreed upon, and the father kept his place of business open later than usual wait-ing for the bald delinquent. Suddenly an excited man rushed into the store, exclaiming: "Mr. Dibblee, have you a wig that will

"Certainly; what color do you want!" "Cortainly; what color do you want;
"Oh, anything! Show me one, quick."
Mr. Dibblee took the wig waiting for his
son and handed it to the impatient customer.
He hastily tried it on, inquired the price, paid
a reckless amount, wixed the wig and went

away in great haste.

That night the wily Tweed disappeared.
The next day New York was all agog with amazement at his hold flight. When it was covered that he had fled in disguise, Mr. Dibblee thoughtfully put two and two togeth-er. He soon after met one of the persons who had been notused of assisting in the flight, and, to verify his suspicious, said to him: "So you succeeded in getting the old man

"Yes; but we should not have done it if it had not been for your wig."—New York

Trees in the Valley of Mexico.

A contract was intely concluded by the Mexican government with Mr. Oscar Drosge, to plant 2,000,000 trees in the valley of Mexico, within four years. The trees specific i are chiefly ash, poplar, acadia and mountain colar, with a sufficient margin for miscellaneous kinds, according to special conditions of site and chimate; and the arrangements contemplate the formation of national nurseries in which the study of seientific forestry may be pursued on a footing in some degree commensurate with its importance. The valley was densely wooded in the time of Montesuma, when Cortez and the Spaniards entered the country. But the Spaniards burnt off and destroyed

the timber. - Scientific American. A View of a Life-Long Student. For myself I no more call the Crusades folly than I call the cruption of a volcano felly, or the French revolution folly, or any other bursting of the lava which lies in nature or in the bearts of mankind. It is the way in which nature is pleased to shape the crust of the curth and to single human society. Our turings with these things is to malerstand them, in the quarrel with them.—

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